

May 24, 2006

TO: Interested Parties, Practitioners, Local Governments, Industry Associates

FROM: NOAA Fisheries, Northwest Region

RE: Public Comment Period and Community Meeting on NOAA Fisheries' Proposed Listing of Puget Sound Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

A community meeting will be held in Seattle (Washington) on June 22, 2006, regarding NOAA Fisheries' recent proposal to list Puget Sound steelhead as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The evening meeting will be designed to provide the general public with the opportunity to learn more about the proposed listing, as well as to discuss and comment on the proposal.

Background

On March 29, 2006, NOAA Fisheries proposed to list steelhead populations in Puget Sound as threatened under the ESA and announced a public comment period extending through June 27, 2006. NOAA Fisheries is conducting the June 22nd open-house public meeting as part of its commitment to provide ample opportunities to receive public input.

Meeting Location and Format

The meeting will be held in the evening from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., June 22, 2006, at the Radisson Hotel (SeaTac Airport), 18118 International Blvd., Seattle WA 98188. There is no need to register; just drop in anytime during the course of the evening event.

The community meeting will be an "open-house" format, allowing all interested members of the public to more effectively engage in the rulemaking process. The general public will have the opportunity to meet with NOAA Fisheries staff in small groups on specific topics in order to learn more about the proposal and its possible impacts on their communities. This meeting is also an opportunity for the public to provide oral testimony; however, the preferred means of providing public information for the official record is via written comment, either prepared in advance of or following the meeting.

For those who are interested, there will be a brief introductory presentation at 6:30 p.m. regarding the Puget Sound steelhead proposal and the ESA rulemaking process. After the introductory remarks, attendees can move freely from "station" to "station" to discuss items of particular interest with knowledgeable NOAA Fisheries staff. NOAA believes that this format is respectful of the public's valuable time, allowing busy community members to participate without necessarily attending the entire evening.

Additional Opportunities to Provide Comment

NOAA Fisheries scheduled this community meeting in anticipation that affected stakeholders and members of the public may prefer to discuss these proposals directly

with staff during the public comment period. However, this meeting is *not* the only opportunity to provide input on this proposal. Interested individuals are encouraged to provide input regarding the proposal to NOAA Fisheries by standard mail, email, or the Internet until the scheduled close of the comment period on June 27, 2006. Comments may be submitted: by standard mail to Chief, NMFS, Protected Resources Division, 1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97232; by email to PS.Steelhead.nwr@noaa.gov; or via the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

You may obtain more information, including the relevant *Federal Register* notices, on the Internet at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov>. Alternatively, you may contact Dr. Scott Rumsey, NOAA Fisheries, Northwest Region, by phone at (503) 872-2791, or by e-mail at scott.rumsey@noaa.gov.